

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Chairman, Immigration, Refugees and Border Senate Judiciary Subcommittee
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

December 10, 2009

Dear Chairman Schumer,

We write as leaders of Jewish community organizations who strongly believe that our country would benefit from improvements to our immigration system. Our views are shaped by the teachings of our Jewish religious and ethical traditions, as well as our core American values. With this background, we call on our leaders to reform our immigration laws to “welcome the stranger” and to provide an effective immigration system characterized by the rule of law, national interest, and compassionate treatment of newcomers.

We urge you to introduce legislation that will accomplish the following:

- Reform our family-based immigration system to significantly reduce waiting times for separated families, who currently must wait many years to be reunited. Family is a cornerstone value for the Jewish community. According to Jewish tradition, “Kin and family resemble a heap of stones; if one stone is taken out of it, the whole collapses.” (Genesis Rabbah). Immigration laws that separate families fail to honor this basic principle of family unity;
- Provide an opportunity for hard-working immigrants who are already contributing to our country to come out of the shadows, regularize their status upon satisfaction of reasonable criteria, and become lawful permanent residents and eventually United States citizens;
- Offer legal avenues for workers and their families who wish to migrate to the U.S. to and work in a safe, legal, and orderly manner with their rights fully protected;
- Financially support local governments and community organizations that provide classes and services that to assist immigrants with full integration into society; and
- Protect our border and enforces immigration laws in a manner that bolsters our national security, while balancing enforcement priorities with economic development and human and civil rights protections, including due process.

We realize the deliberations on immigration reform will be difficult, but we firmly believe that with your leadership, Congress can ensure that our country's immigration laws are reformed in a comprehensive manner that will make the United States stronger and safer while honoring family values and our tradition as a nation of immigrants. The organizations signed on this letter are committed to working with you to achieve comprehensive immigration reform in 2010. Please let us know how we can support your efforts in Congress this year.

Sincerely,